CALFED
BAY-DELTA
PROGRAM

1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155
Sacramento, California 95814

(916) 657-2666
FAX (916) 654-9780

Memorandum

Date: March 2, 1999

To: CALFED Policy Group

From: Lester A. Snow

Subject: Tracy Fish Facility

Summary

In January CALFED staff recommended support for moving forward with a proposal to design and construct Tracy Fish Facility improvements to address long-standing concerns associated with the current facilities. CALFED participating agencies indicated that a properly structured, interagency project management process would be necessary to assure that their input would be fully incorporated into the project. In response, CALFED staff has drafted, circulated for review, and finalized a Proposed Project Management Organization Agreement for the New Tracy Fish Facility Program. The proposed agreement incorporates all agency comments received on the draft document, and establishes a facilitated design development and review process conducted by the Tracy Technical Advisory Team, under the policy guidance of a Project Management Group. The first facilitated meeting of the TTAT will be on March 4.

CALFED staff is also recommending that the Policy Group endorse the concept of retaining two points of diversion for the CVP and SWP throughout Stage 1 of CALFED Program implementation in order to expedite resolution of south Delta fishery concerns, and to retain maximum operational flexibility, consistent with the principles of adaptive management.

With concurrence by the CALFED State/Federal Small Group on February 23, USBR has initiated the public scoping process for the project and will distribute meeting notices during the week of March 2. Public scoping meetings will be held on March 17 and 18.

Action Required

- The proposed agreement is ready for signature by USFWS, NMFS, CDFG, CDWR, USBR, and CALFED. Staff is recommending that the agreement be signed and implemented.

- Staff is also seeking an endorsement by the Policy Group of the concept of retaining two points of diversion for the CVP and SWP through Stage 1.

Background

The proposed project would provide best available technology screening for up to 2500 cfs at an approach velocity compatible with delta smelt salvage in conformance with other fishery agency screening criteria. It would incorporate the structural and operational flexibility to optimize screening operations for multiple species in the challenging south Delta environment. The facility would be designed and constructed by USBR taking into consideration all input provided by CALFED fishery agencies. The facility could provide important information to guide the development of screening facilities for the SWP as well, if it can move forward expeditiously.

The "Tracy Fish Facility Project (TFF) Proposed Project Management Organization Agreement" and "Overview of the Planned New Tracy Fish Facility Program (TFF)", both dated February 26, 1999 are attached and provide detailed background information.

A decision to move forward with the Tracy Fish Facility would ultimately represent a considerable financial commitment of approximately $137 million. That decision would not be made until the design process is completed to the satisfaction of the involved agencies and an appropriate mix of funding sources is identified. However, a conceptual decision on whether or not to retain two points of diversion (with the future opportunity to construct one or more interties) may be made now. Such a decision could be made on the basis of practical considerations which are summarized below. It is unlikely that definitive scientific information will be developed in the near term which could provide additional guidance in making this decision, hence there is not strong justification for delaying it. The incentive for making the decision now would be to provide a clear policy framework for the proposed effort to design and construct the New Tracy Fish Facility (first 2500 cfs module) and to complete the South Delta Improvements jointly proposed by CDWR and USBR.

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General Considerations, Two Diversion Facilities versus One

- Timing and Implementability: Tracy FF can improve fish survival within 3 years. A consolidated diversion will require construction of a physical intertie, with a new set of environmental, engineering, political, and agency coordination issues. It would likely take least 10 years to implement.

- Principle of Adaptive Management: Build at the appropriate scale and learn from the first module to assure that investment in additional screening facilities will be effective.

- Increased Reliability through Redundancy: Potential contingencies for which two separate diversion points might increase reliability include mitten crab migration, new introduced species such as zebra mussels and other species which may affect screen integrity and maintenance requirements, debris and floating vegetation, vandalism and terrorism, power outages, flooding, earthquake, and toxic spills.

- Operational Flexibility: Two diversion points offer greater operational flexibility to minimize impacts. For example, two diversion points may take advantage of uneven distributions of critical fish species such as delta smelt, and allow for some separation of export supplies based on differing water quality requirements.

- Efficiency: A single large diversion facility can likely be more efficient than two separate facilities, with economies of scale and consolidation of many functions. This could ultimately result in lower operational costs.

- Stranded Costs: If two diversion points are screened in Stage 1, but the ultimate decision is to consolidate diversions, one of the diversion points would be shut down at some time in the future. The depreciated value of the facility at the time it is shut down would represent the stranded cost associated with this strategy. There is also a risk of stranded cost associated with a consolidated diversion point, because the facility may require significant reconstruction to correct unanticipated problems.